

ACT ONE

Scene 2

A compartment of a European railway train. It appears to be in motion.

CLIFFORD BRADSHAW is alone in the compartment - asleep. He is in his late twenties, pleasant-looking, intelligent, reserved. His suitcase and portable typewriter are on the rack above his head.

ERNST LUDWIG enters. He is German, about thirty, friendly and likable. He carries a suitcase, a brown leather briefcase and a magazine. He seems rather nervous.

ERNST

Occupied?

(CLIFF opens his eyes and shakes his head)

It is permitted?

CLIFF

Please.

(ERNST places his suitcase on the rack over the seat opposite CLIFF. He puts his briefcase on the floor beside his legs as he sits down)

ERNST

English?

CLIFF

American.

ERNST

German. Berlin. Ernst Ludwig.

(They shake hands)

CLIFF

Clifford Bradshaw. Pennsylvania. Are we slowing down for the German border?

ERNST

Ja.

CLIFF

You've taken this trip before?

ERNST

Many many times.

(ERNST shows increasing signs of nervousness)

You are a tourist?

CLIFF

No! Not exactly. I'm a writer and I give English lessons.

(The train stops. ERNST gets up and surveys the corridor)

Would you care for a cigarette?

(There is no answer)

Herr Ludwig?

ERNST

(Absently)

Ja?

CLIFF

A cigarette?

ERNST

No. Thank you.

(ERNST suddenly sits down and pretends to be absorbed in a magazine. Two German CUSTOMS OFFICERS enter the compartment)

OFFICER

Deutsche Grenzkontrolle. Ihre passe bitte.

CLIFF

I beg your pardon?

OFFICER

Your passport, if you please.

(CLIFF hands his passport to the OFFICER)

OFFICER (Cont'd)
 Welcome to Germany, Mr. Bradshaw.
 (The OFFICER indicates CLIFF's bags)
 Yours?

(CLIFF nods. The OFFICER puts a Customs mark on his bags without even taking them off the rack. Then he turns to ERNST, who is deep in his magazine)

Ihren pass, bitte.

(ERNST hands over his passport)

Sie waren geschäftlich in Paris?

ERNST
 Nein. Auf einer urlaubreise.

OFFICER
 Offen sie ihre tasche.

(ERNST takes down his suitcase and opens it. The OFFICER goes through it. While the OFFICER's back is turned ERNST takes his briefcase off the floor and puts it on the rack over CLIFF's head. CLIFF is surprised, but says nothing. The OFFICER marks ERNST's bag)

Haben sie nur diese eine tasche?

ERNST
 Ja. Das ist alles.

OFFICER
 (To CLIFF)
 I wish you will enjoy your stay in Germany. And a most Happy New Year.

(The OFFICER exits. ERNST, very relieved, retrieves his briefcase)

CLIFF
 What's in the bag?

ERNST
 (Too casual)
 What? Baubles from Paris: perfume...silk stockings... But more than is permitted. You understand?

CLIFF

(Nods)

I guess I've done a little smuggling myself.

ERNST

(With new vigor)

You are most understanding. I thank you very much. And I would like to see to it that Berlin will open its arms to you! We begin tonight -- New Year's Eve -- the Kit Kat Klub! The hottest spot in Berlin. Telephones on every table. Girls call you. You call them. Instant connections.

CLIFF

(Shaking his head)

Thanks - but I've still got to find a room.

ERNST

You have no room! But this is no problem!

(He takes out a card and writes on it)

I know the finest residence in all Berlin. Just tell Fraulein Schneider that Ernst Ludwig has recommended you.

CLIFF

I can't afford the finest residence in Berlin. I need something inexpensive.

ERNST

But this is inexpensive! Very inexpensive! She has this kind of room and that kind of room. Absolute satisfaction!

CLIFF

I don't care if it's awful - as long as it's cheap.

ERNST

But this is awful. You will love it!

(The train starts again. ERNST hands CLIFF the card. CLIFF reads it)

CLIFF

Fraulein Schneider...

ERNST

You see! You see! You have a new friend - Ernst Ludwig! You have a fine place to live! And you have perhaps even your first English pupil!

(He indicates himself. CLIFF is quite surprised)

Ja! So welcome to Berlin, my friend. Welcome to Berlin!

(Music starts)